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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

35¢

VOL.5 NO. 17
FIRST ISSUE OF
SEPTEMBER 1975
Issue #115

ON THE COVER:

Labor Day Train: The traditional end of the summer season came as early as it possibly can this year (Sept 1), and on that date the westbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, moved rather slowly thru Emeryville, California on its last leg into end-point Oakland, to avoid being too early on its heavily padded schedule. The day's consist featured an ex-SP dome lounge, and the tail car was Great Western Tours' private car "Redwood." Photo by Message Media.

LETTERS

After reading all the flap opposing the proposed southern transcontinental route from the anonymous Amtrak employee in the First August RTN, we are inclined to feel that we are doing more good than we had anticipated--and perhaps should step up the tempo of our activity. This individual is obviously poorly informed regarding the potentials, traffic patterns, and growth in the South.

The other routes he mentioned are fine and if the people in those areas want service they should be working on their respective projects as hard as we are on ours. Dallas puts its money where its mouth is. They spent $6 million on a first class railroad station which they are leasing to Amtrak virtually at cost. Who else can make this statement? In return for this we have been awarded a three-times-a-week disaster which takes forever to go nowhere and was without air conditioning for the first year--and a rinky-dink two-car connection with the LONE STAR which featured a non-air conditioned sleeping car the first month and insufficient coach seats for the people wanting to use it, not to mention the fact that the reservation centers were not aware of its existence for over four weeks. Not that Dallas isn't glad to have this service, but it is only a shadow of what was postulated and we have worked for it for four years. On the basis of this, we should have started work on the transcontinental ten years ago instead of last year. Cleveland may be receiving its train 1½ years later than Dallas but it will involve substantially more meaningful service for considerably less investment on their part, since it goes somewhere significant in both directions every day without taking forever to do it.

A question for the anonymous one--what does he think Dallas has been doing but striving for the Houston corridor and a more logical INTER-AMERICAN? These have been our prime objectives and the transcontinental was conceived for long-range planning, as RTN pointed out. Nobody here thought of running it ahead of the established priorities and we heartily agree that the GULF WIND route is the next logical step.

Referring to five objections that he listed: (1) He can cease worrying about Atlanta as a turnaround point, as the proposal has been extended to include Savannah; (2) The Shreveport Chamber of Commerce engaged a retired track engineer to evaluate the Louisiana track and he found no major problems (115# rail, ample ballast, 45mph freight speeds); (3) Use unmanned stations in smaller cities as they are doing in Texas and Arkansas; (4) It is ridiculous to scrap any of the Amtrak cars except a few that might have serious corrosion or frame deterioration. Amtrak should have purchased 3000 cars from the railroads instead of allowing everyone from the NdeM to the Algoma Central to get off with 1000 of them. These operators along with Auto-Train will have them in service for many years to come. The Red train of the Ringling Bros. Circus is a prime example of what can be done in refurbishing older cars including equipping with train line power and serviceable air conditioning at a cost of less than $10,000 per car. Amtrak has no business considering scrapping 1000 of the present cars. New cars cannot be purchased fast enough to absorb the additional traffic that they will attract; (5) Any worries about load factors on this route should be resolved by a close look at Delta Airline's record. They have continuously had excellent business on a precisely parallel route and at various times when other airlines were ready to fold their wings. It was so good that Eastern fought vigorously until they were allowed to compete. Continental Trailways regards it as one of their best routes and buses between Dallas and Monroe frequently run in two sections, in fact it is reported to be more heavily utilized than Dallas-Houston. If this is such dismal travel territory, why did they bother to build an Interstate highway thru the exact same area?

Myopic thinking regarding the above points is just another case of an Easterner sitting in Washington looking thru the wrong end of a telescope which cannot penetrate the haze of the Smoky Mountains. Short haul routes lose money because there is no substantial line-haul involved and vacation routes make money only during vacation periods. This route promises uniform utilization the year round because of the varied purposes it serves. It hasn't gotten thru to the Easterners yet that California is now the most populous state, New York second, and Texas third, so the population concentrations are not all east of the Mississippi River (1974 Dept. of Commerce figures).

A diversion via New Orleans is in no way acceptable for this route. For over a half-century an iron curtain existed at the Mississippi River, making it impossible for people from the Southwest to travel by rail to the Deep South without considerable inconvenience or a detour via New Orleans. This would be perpetuating the malpractices of the railroads which Amtrak was designed to remedy in establishing direct routes. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in airline volume between Dallas-Atlanta and Dallas-New Orleans. They are both over the 150,000 passengers per year level. New Orleans service is needed on a Denver-Dallas-New Orleans route which we have also endorsed.

The anonymous writer may be proud of Amtrak's accomplishments in the past 6 months but the last 4 years is something else. If I claimed to be proud of the first 3½, I would remain anonymous too. If Amtrak's revenues are down, it is not because of the recession. It is because the air conditioning doesn't work and the route structure is too thin. You just can't get there from here or anywhere else.

Amtrak does need all the friends they can get and the best way to acquire them is to give service. It is time for them to cease making excuses and set about establishing a nationwide passenger service as the people expect. It is a wise investment for the future and comes at nominal cost compared to other less prudent government expenditures. Needless to say, our efforts will continue unabated and if we can assist any other section of the country in obtaining a viable route, we shall be glad to do so.

M. D. Monaghan
Dallas City-County Amtrak Committee

Garland, Texas

With all due respect to the reasoning behind the letters which endorsed the expressions of the anonymous Amtrak employee, the following should be remembered: These expressions were those of an individual, not official policies and plans of the Amtrak organization, and it was even necessary for this individual to hide behind a mask of anonymity. Amtrak has not up to this point released anything that resembles long-range planning pertaining to expansion, nor is there any indication that they will do so in the predictable future.

We have only the "Amtrak 80" document (RTN, 1st Aug issue) and the various proposals of interested passenger proponents to serve as instruments and guidelines for developing a reasonable nationwide system for serving the needs of the public.

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Until such long-range planning appears, it is fitting and proper that public and political influence be exerted upon Amtrak to keep the ball rolling and to avoid a status quo situation. Things are unquestionably better at Amtrak now, but it will have to remain a "pressure cooker" until desired goals are attained.

J. Gilson Wildhagen, President
Southwest Railroad Historical Society
Dallas, Texas

I suppose by now you're awash in complaints over the "Amtrak Supervisors" hoax; (Express Ads, last issue) but I write just in case everyone else decided it wasn't worth the time to complain. Please check out your advertisers more carefully.

Jonathan DuBert
Houston, Texas

(Dare ya to print this one, kids! Let's put your dedication to "free exchange of ideas" to the test:)

I really do wonder about the sanity of your readers as reflected by the comments on Amtrak travel in recent RTNs. Despite Horror Stories beyond belief, they continue to ride passenger trains! And many even freely admit to riding a particular train "10 to 15 times so far this year"--with each ride more miserable, painful, boring (even life endangering!) than the last. Haven't any of you heard of the auto or airplane?? Both are far faster, cheaper and much more pleasant than Amtrak.

No, I can only conclude that those RTN readers who continue "torture by Amtrak" are truly afflicted with the purest form of masochism.

A. Mazzo Kist
San Francisco, California

(Ed. Note: We'd like to freely exchange some ideas about our vacation trip this year--as mentioned briefly in the First July issue. It was an all-auto trip on Interstate 80. Why do we continue to travel on this freeway we dislike? We hate being strapped immobile in our seat for hours, our eyes riveted on the exhaust pipe of the car ahead, knowing that one false move could mean instant death for us and our companions. The constant vibration of the pavement is irritatingly transmitted to our body even in our big, sophisticated Detroit Monster. How much more fun to sit on a train and, drink in hand, argue with a surly lounge car attendant! The reason we continue our dehumanizing auto travel is very simple: economics. The System has been arranged so that the only economically feasible way of getting to our vacation spot is by private auto. The System could be rearranged.

Now, another comment: RTN will henceforth print no unsigned ads or letters without legitimate reason. Name and address must accompany each item. One exception to this rule will be the comments made in the Reader Train Rating Survey.)

SUMMARY OF FALL AMTRAK SCHEDULE CHANGES

Amtrak has come up with some extensive changes this autumn, to be carried out in two stages. The first, effective Sept 14, while this issue is in press, involves the Northeast Corridor, the FLORIDIAN, and the New York-Florida trains. The second, effective Oct 26 with the return to Standard Time, involves re-scheduling of virtually all long distance trains plus some others. The Oct 26 changes have not been finalized yet, and no official word from Amtrak is available, only word of plans being decided upon.

Amtrak has already issued Sept 14 timetables for New York-Washington and New York -Florida, plus a Chicago-Seattle schedule that merely shows the change of the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA back to tri-weekly running (it will run daily for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, and again next summer). The Chicago-Florida FLORIDIAN will get the addition of two new stops Sept 14--Lafayette, IN and Bloomington, IN on its L&N routing. It is scheduled as follows: lv Chicago 9pm, Lafayette 12:05am, Bloomington 3:15am, Nashville 11am, Jacksonville 3:30am, Orlando 6am, Poinciana 6:40am,

St. Petersburg 11:15am, Miami 11:59am (lengthening the schedule by 34 mins). Northbound it leaves Miami 5:35pm, St. Pete 6:05pm, Orlando 9:45pm, Jacksonville 1:50am, Nashville 5pm, Bloomington 12:30am, Lafayette 3:35am, arrive Chicago 7am (St. Pete and Miami sections of the train combine at Jacksonville.

The Florida service will see the SILVER METEOR and CHAMPION combined into a single train for the fall off-season, with the restoration of Passenger Service Representatives and On-board Service Supervisors. A hospitality hour will be offered from 4:30-6pm with drinks sold at $1 each in the two lounge cars. There will be games and prizes, and for first class passengers free hors d'oeuvres and wake-up coffee. Amtrak states that improved dining menus will be offered. The train will leave New York at 3:50pm, Washington 8:10pm, arriving Jacksonville 9:40am, with the METEOR section leaving there at 10:30 and the CHAMPION section leaving 10:35. The CHAMPION arrives at St. Pete at 6:06pm, while the METEOR reaches Miami at 6:10. Northbound, Miami departure is 8:55am, St. Pete departure 9:10am, Jacksonville arrival 4:20 and departure 5:05pm. The train reaches Washington at 6:55am and leaves at 7:15, reaching New York at 11:20am. These schedules are effective thru Dec 11, until winter schedules take effect.

Amtrak said that Quantico, VA retains its station stop of the SILVER STAR, a result of increased patronage at that city, brought about partly thru the efforts of local train supporters. Patronage at Quantico rose to 291 in July.

Northeast Corridor changes Sept 14 include a new thru Springfield, MA-Washington service, leaving Springfield 6:15am and consolidating with train 161 at New Haven. The 9am TurboTrain from Boston is changed to 7am, replacing the NEW ENGLANDER. The 2:10pm Turbo from New York is moved to 4:10pm, again replacing the NEW ENGLANDER.

Several weak corridor trains were dropped to cut expenses, the SOUTHERN CRESCENT regains its Trenton stop, and the NY-Phila. roundtrip which was earlier added to serve Trenton is dropped. The weekend VALLEY FORGE (Boston-Harrisburg) gets the ax. The 10pm clocker from New York is dropped. The 9:50pm Hartford-New Haven RDC goes, replaced by an 11:30pm run Fri and Sun, connecting with tne NIGHT OWL. The 7:10pm Springfield-New Haven RDC is dropped, replaced by a new 5:20pm RDC from Springfield, connecting with the MERCHANTS--formerly this connection ran only from Hartford.

Northbound, the 9:30am New Haven-Hartford RDC was extended to Springfield. The CONNECTICUT YANKEE, formerly Phila.-Springfield, now is cut to New York-Springfield. The Fri.-only 5:10pm DC-Boston is dropped, and corridor passengers will again be allowed to ride the northbound MONTREALER on Fridays.

New train 141 (connecting with 161 at New Haven) will carry a parlor car, snack car and coach out of Springfield, and will run to Washington. It will be named the BANKERS, a name from the old New Haven R.R. train which ran on a similar schedule.

Unofficial word of changes being considered for Oct 26 and later include: the BROADWAY LIMITED leaving Chicago at 3:30pm, arriving Chicago 10:40am. Westbound train would leave NY, stopping at Newark & Trenton, then non-stop to Harrisburg. Washington section would run via Baltimore, Wilmington, Phila. (30th St), Paoli & Lancaster. Diner-lounge would be added to Washington section, operating Harrisburg-DC only. It would remain to Chicago in peak seasons. One of the two slumbercoaches would go to DC. Arrangement of consist in Harrisburg would be changed: rather than simply coupling cars on the rear, the 2 coaches & slumbercoach would go on front of train, with sleeper and sleeper-lounge on rear, thus dividing the coach and sleeper sections and giving each its own lounge.

The LONE STAR may depart Chicago at 4:30, arriving there at 11am. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR may leave Chicago at 4pm, reaching Oakland about 3:20pm, while the eastbound SFZ would leave Oakland at 10:55am (55mins later). The SAN JOAQUIN would leave Oakland at 10am (back to its original time), and arrive Oakland at 7:45pm instead of 6, allowing a possible roundtrip of one equipment set if running times

were speeded up a bit. The COAST STARLIGHT would have slight adjustments to Glendale and Oxnard schedules. Amtrak is expected to close the Alhambra station on the Sunset Route. The SOUTHWEST LIMITED is expected to reach Chicago earlier, at 1:35 pm. The JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY and the EMPIRE BUILDER may both leave Chicago at 2:30. The BLACK HAWK may leave Chicago earlier, at 5:15pm. The Chicago-St. Louis Turbos are expected to leave Chicago at 8:10am and 4:15pm, and daily except Sat. at 5:45pm. Turbo 304 from St. Louis will reach Chicago at 8:59pm. The 3 Chicago-Detroit Turbos are to run daily, and will depart Chicago at 7:45am, 1:50pm, and 4:20pm. A limousine service between Windsor and Detroit is expected to be inaugurated. A tri-weekly train between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, NV may run soon under a 403-b financing arrangement with Nevada. Overland Tours of L.A. is interested in extending such a run from Las Vegas to Salt Lake City as a ski train, using its own equipment. The coach diner is expected to be removed from the SOUTHWEST LIMITED this fall. Bear in mind that these late fall changes are tentative, but they reflect the kind of planning that Amtrak is attempting at this time.

TURBOLINERS TO GO ON EMPIRE SERVICE

Amtrak announced shortly after Labor Day that it will place 7 Turboliners on the New York-Buffalo route next year, the first to appear in early summer, with the remainder by year's end. The trains will be built by Rohr Corp. Amtrak's Board of Directors has approved purchase of land north of the Albany-Rensselaer station for construction of a Turbo maintenance facility. New York's Commissioner of Transportation has proposed adding another 11 trains to the route, according to the NY Times.

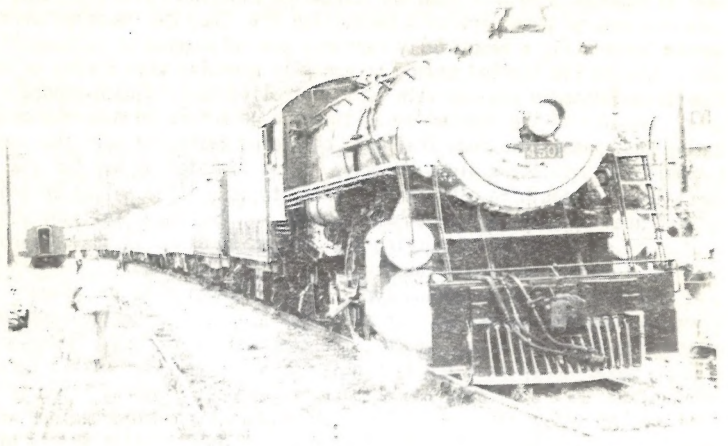
Steam for NRHS

Kenneth A. Maylath

The way to get to a railway convention is by rail, if possible. Knoxville, Tenn., hasn't seen a regularly scheduled passenger train since before Amtrak. Convention-bound travelers to the 1975 National Railway Historical Society gathering over the Labor Day weekend were able to overcome that lack by means of a special movement--the TENNESSEE SPECIAL--from Washington to Knoxville via Asheville on the Southern.

An on-time Metroliner run brought me from Baltimore to Washington, depositing me in the maze of construction that is Union Station these days about 90 minutes before the scheduled 9pm departure of the Special. As passengers began loading more than an hour before that time, they found a most interesting and substantial consist across the platform from Amtrak's CHAMPION. Southern President Graham Claytor wasn't about to miss this one, and his office car #1 was cut in behind the green E units. The Lake Shore NRHS Chapter's lightweight sleeper "Pend Oreille River" (operating from Pittsburgh) followed. Then, privately owned ex-L&N sleeper "Florida Surf" from St. Petersburg. The train's only coach, Southern 1044, came next. Then followed "Crescent Shores", heavyweight section car "Lake Pearl", "Georgia", "Royal Court", "Royal Palm", and four 10-6 sleepers: "Ocmulgee River" (in which I had roomette 1), "Dan River", "Tiger River", and "Saluda River". The 14th and final piece of equipment, "Buena Vista", is almost unique in railroading. It's Southern's inspection car with a glass back and rows of seats in the rear on risers--as in a theater. It also includes several tables, a bar and small kitchen. Needless to say, it was a treat rolling down the main toward Charlottesville, track lights on, watching the speedometer and listening to Mr. Claytor provide commentary for a time on the PA system.

Departure came 18 minutes late; and after a brief stop at Alexandria, we were rolling down Southern's well-maintained main toward Charlottesville. We held our own into the division point at Monroe--pulling in 20 minutes late for a 3-hour layover scheduled to avoid an overly early arrival in Salisbury, NC. Indeed, we



The 4501 and TENNESSEE SPECIAL at Asheville.

were in the yards before 6 with switching underway to regroup the train for the next segment of the trip over the line to Asheville. Eight cars--from the "Georgia" to the rear--were dropped, and replaced by 6 others. Leading the group was "Queen and Crescent" #4061--a baggage car converted to a refreshment sales car. It provided continental breakfasts on departure from Salisbury. Former Central of Georgia combo "Man O' War" #726 followed, like "Queen and Cr3scent" normally used on Southern's steam-powered excursions. Coaches 1037-8-9 handled passengers from the sleepers. On the rear was open observation "Lookout Mountain" #1056, an excursion regular.

At 8am--right on time--off on the 4-hour, 140-mile run to Asheville--until recently home of the tri-weekly connection to the PIEDMONT. The fairly slow running time is not due to poor maintenance; rather, to the twisting nature of the line, particularly the last 30 miles where Southern has begun an excursion operation. Much of the trackage is welded rail.

Arrival in Asheville came 15 mins down due to some major track work just north of there. More shuffling of equipment during a 75-min layover, as shutters snapped and lunch was eaten at nearby fast food restaurants. The key shuffle was the substitution of steamer 4501 for the 3 E units. Two open-window excursion coaches and open-observation "Missionary Ridge" were cut in the middle, and the "Lake Pearl" removed. (It showed up in Knoxville by the following afternoon.)

At 1:30pm, right on time, we were off past Southern's Asheville yard with a brief pause to let a freight clear and a look at the equipment assembled for use on the new excursion runs from Asheville (including dome and 2 open gondolas). Again, a slow average speed as we followed the French Broad River along the route of the CAROLINA SPECIAL. Again, credit the curves and not the track, which continued to be mostly welded rail.

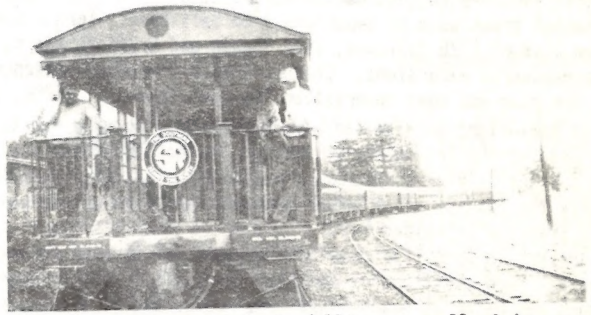
A photo runby about 40 miles from Asheville, and another stop about 10 miles from Morristown, TN to attach a helper up front and assure sufficient horsepower to get our heavy tonnage up the afternoon's major grade. At Morristown it was off with the diesel and on to Southern's double track Bristol-Knoxville main stem. Surprisingly the first 20 or so miles out of Morristown featured the worst track of the trip. We bounced over poor jointed rail à la Penn Central, but had a stretch of much better welded trackage for the last lap into Knoxville and a 7pm arrival--about 30 mins late.

Southern's station is essentially unchanged since the days of passenger service, with track in and sheds up. The 1830 Best Friend of Charleston replica with a

pair of coaches from that same era waited on a siding to do its thing the next day.

In a change of pace, Friday's convention trip (Aug 29) featured Clinchfield's excursion engine #1, a beautifully restored gem outshopped at Logansport, Indiana in 1882. Due to its limited power, it normally operates with B unit helpers--but this time it would be on its own with just 3 of Clinchfield's open-window excursion coach3s. Because of the limited capacity and double fare to make the complete trip by train, most passengers rode Trailways chartered buses for half the journey, making a couple of photo stops along the way. I was ticketed by bus for the first leg--about 30 miles south on L'N's main to Atlanta to a place called Greenback. It's located just off the main on a branch which was the main line many years ago. The local fire dept. watered #1 during the hour or so stop, as most riders switched from bus to train or vice versa.

We got more than we bargained for. First, a portion of the branch line has been approved for abandonment--and our train was supposed to be the last thru movement of any kind over the line. Second, the combination of rusty, grass-grown rails and a balky sander on #1 made the trip quite a challenge--even with 3 cars. It took 3 tries to get up a mile-long grade out of Greenback. Several times we slowed to a walk amid showering cinders and slipping drivers, wondering whether we'd make it. we did. A couple of hours later, the junction with the high iron a bit south of Knoxville and back home with no further problems. We backed into the L&N station--largely unchanged but minus its platform canopy--at mid-afternoon, and I headed back to the Southern station for a ride on the Best Friend.



Open car "Lookout Mountain" on the Special at Asheville, Aug 28.

It was 4501 as star again for a Saturday trip to Jellico, a small mining community on the Tenn-Kentucky border north of Knoxville. We headed west on Southern's main line toward Harriman Jct for 21 miles--then swung north on a branch which handles heavy coal tonnage and has welded rail and good ballast as a result. Many grades meant some hard work for 4501 pulling 11 cars. A helper was used for the first 30 miles out of Jellico on the return to avoid a lot of choking in a series of tunnels. The consist included combo 726 ("Man O' War"), coaches 3659, 1067, 1081, 1069 (open car "Missionary Ridge"), commissary car 4061, "Queen and Crescent Club", coaches 1087, 1086, 1037 (closed), and of course open observation "Lookout Mountain" (1056).

Sunday's "dual" trip featured a first--4501 in tandem with 3 green E units. The 21-car consist was obviously too much for 4501,and the diesels, used for the trip from Washington, had to return there anyway. It was essentially a combination of the excursion equipment car which came from Washington and a couple of N&W coaches. At Bristol, TN a reshuffling of equipment sent 9 excursion cars back to Knoxville with 4501 handling those taking a one-day roundtrip. The other 12 headed on to Roanoke with the diesels for an overnight stop before returning to Washington via N&W's Shenandoah Valley Line and Southern's Front Royal branch.

There was another event, as 4501 and its excursion cars headed on a 1-way trip from Knoxville to Birmingham on Monday. That was a bonus made available by SR on short notice, and not part of the regular convention program.

Photography by the author

THIS IS THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR IN WHICH MR. LEE HAS WRITTEN A REVIEW OF AMTRAK'S EMPIRE BUILDER -- WHICH MUST MAKE THIS EVALUATION SOMETHING OF AN ANNUAL EVENT

EMPIRE BUILDER 1975

by Glenn Lee

Many of us who live along the Inland Sea come to be permanently fascinated by the tides--the slow-motion heartbeat of our planet. Eventually we are intrigued by the fact that in many of the channels a strongly flowing tide, which seems almost unstoppable, can be near its peak strength shortly before a slack. Indeed, in some areas, a full ebb can be underway in mid-channel at the same time a new tide is forcing itself in from the sea along the shores.

I could not help but think of this analogy during a ride this August on the EMPIRE BUILDER from Seattle to Northern Idaho. Altho the EMPIRE BUILDER is surely staggering at the hands of four years of bad Amtrak management, and altho the tide seems unstoppable, I am led to believe that, just as along our Inland Sea, a new tide, running in the opposite direction, may be upon us soon.

Seattle was having a sadly typical overcast day when I arrived at the King St. station to pick up my tickets for Sandpoint, Idaho at 12:30pm, some 45 minutes before the 1:15pm departure. Although the temperature was little past 55°, the humidity was nearly 100% as I discovered a line of 25 people at the one open ticket window. I began to feel somewhat like Jacques Tati in his famous, bittersweet film about August vacations, "Mr. Hulot's Holiday," which begins with much farce at the train station.

The telephone lines which connect the station to the reservation computer in Los Angeles were not working properly, and the reservation clerk could obtain no information on space or fares. Within a few minutes, a man behind the counter opened his window and began selling tickets for those without reservations. Eventually the electronic marvels burped to life, and within a few moments, I was en route to my first class space...

...adjacent to the deteriorated roomette window of my sleeper, "Pacific Union". In order to obtain what I felt might be my last unfettered look at the Great Train, I made a quick check on the platform before departure. Our consist was: locomotives 540 and 531; mail cars 1024 and NP 213; bag-dorm BN 425; slumbercoach 2024 "Loch Sloy"; coaches 9501 "Silver Glade", 9481, 4472, and GN 1003; coach dinette 8401; diner 9096; sleepers 2639 "Pacific Union", 9223, 2251 "Star Crest", and BN business car "Red River", bearing BN v.p. Scanlon and a number of children.

I rested for a few moments as we got underway at 1:15pm on the dot, and looked around my roomette. It was not as bad as recent "scare" stories in the press may have indicated, and the worst display of bad decorating judgement was the purple toilet seat. Several minutes later I strolled to the dome-sleeper one car behind, just in time to hear: "Last call to lunch." Others in the dome looked quizzical. Obviously there had been no other calls, and this attracted a bit of attention. Shortly thereafter the brakeman came through to lift tickets, and upon receiving mine, gave me what I felt was a lengthy bit of chatter on my being in the wrong roomette, ending with: "but that's o.k." Obviously the brakeman needed a trip to "charm school", to learn the Number One rule: "Put the Passenger at Ease," and when there is trouble, tell him "Everything is going to be O.K." Make the passenger relax by any necessary means!

But within 10 minutes I could see why there was no charm school in this man's future. An old acquaintance of the brakeman appeared in the dome, and there was much talk about The Number Of Years To Retirement, with a generous

helping of "What's Wrong With The Railroad" clearly audible to the others in the dome. This included problems of drunkenness, railroad cutbacks, retirement problems, pension size, and physical blackouts suffered by other employees.

After this round of One Hundred Per Cent Pure Soap, I felt I might have a difficult time concentrating on the scenery and the pleasure of the train ride, but once the conversation stopped, the unpleasant spell deteriorated rapidly.

Upon leaving Auburn, the passage of trees and creeks gradually brushed me into leisured relaxation, and the dome became a pleasant tranquilizer, lexan windows and all. Seven miles from East Auburn, near the big electrical switching yard marking the west end of the power lines from Grand Coulee Dam, we came to an unscheduled stop. A number of relatives seeing off friends at East Auburn came aboard, and had been carried away. As we sped away from Covington siding, they were heading for a phone near the county road.

As we moved into the Cascades, I had a relaxed opportunity to check the Amtrak Era in the sleeper dome. The 9223 had started life in 1954 as a full sleeping car, with 16 beds, located in 4 roomettes, 4 duplex single rooms under the dome, and 4 double bedrooms to the rear of the dome.

Car 9223 at once seemed to typify both the bitter disregard of the previous railroad managements and the present-day inability of Amtrak to properly management the passenger service. In 1967, shortly after Lou Menk had become Northern Pacific president, two of the duplex rooms under the dome had been removed to make way for a crew buffet, and the 24 forward-facing seats were replaced by seats facing six small tables. This was coincident with the elimination of the NORTH COAST'S observation cars in January, 1967, and for all practical purposes, was to first class lounge patrons on NP what the automat cars had been to dining patrons on Southern Pacific. In effect, the railway was saying: "Get Lost (Slob)".

Today, with a Great Dome missing from the consist, the "Lounge In The Sky" was all there for first class passengers. The buffet below was locked, and there was no beverage service. The enforced intimacy of the dome arrangement retards full use, as single persons, or groups of two, do not like to "excuse" themselves into the four-seat "booth" tables already occupied by one or two others. The only useful seats are two "jump" seats at the forward end of the dome. These are pleasant for one person not wishing the unavailable table service, but in a number of ways these are also deficient -- they are closest to the generally unuseable lexan front windows, and have resulted in the remaining seats being jammed even closer together than would otherwise have been the case.

As the train snaked closer to the western foot of the Cascade mountain grade at Lester, I noticed that on the right side of the dome, the third panel back in the upper tier of glass had only one pane. Closer observation showed a jagged edge where the upper panel of glass had been removed, not by lifting, but perhaps by a chisel. Had this lone surviving panel been struck by rocks, or otherwise damaged, 9223 would have gone out of service at that point, and the train would have been delayed hours until the car could have been switched away. Someone at a coach yard somewhere had negligently approved 9223 for service as the "easy way out", a way altogether too frequently used by Amtrak the last few years.

The trip up the Stampede Pass grade was a great pleasure, as usual, marred only by the realization that the web of Bonneville Power Administration high voltage lines is still growing, and contributing to massive blight in this otherwise scenic zone. Recent experiments with underground high-tension lines near Ellensburg, Wash., may help someday to reduce this impact, but in the early afternoon, the deterioration caused by these lines is unmistakable.

A. THE GOOD NEWS:
The Postal Service has released a stamp commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Service in the U.S.

The stamp design of one of the four (all 4 appear on one sheet) is shown above. This represents the first instance in recent years that modern railroading has been recognized on a U.S. postal design. The diesel shown at upper right of the 10¢ stamp, printed in two shades of blue, even has a hint of an Amtrak-type stripe along the side. The ancient steam locomotive appears in green, gold and blue. The three other stamp designs are for horse-and-carriage/trucking; old and modern aircraft; and telecommunications. The stamps were issued Sept 3.

B. THE BAD NEWS:
The Postal Service has just made known that it will increase the first class postage rate shortly after Christmas to 13¢ per ounce. This massive 30% increase in postage rates will affect RTN severely. Postage is one of our single largest expenses. It appears that will we have no alternative but to pass this increase along to our subscribers. We will make details known later. But now we offer you the opportunity to subscribe for whatever number of years you select at our present $8 per year rate, regardless of how high postal rates climb in the future.

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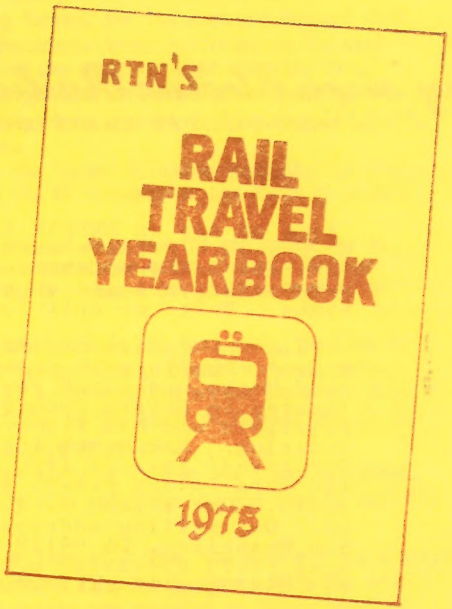

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AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION said this month that it expects much higher earnings than ever before in the fiscal year ending next April 30. Startup costs of the Midwest route have already been written off, and ridership has increased considerably, the corporation said..... SAN DIEGAN LINE was scene of the death of a 17-year old boy playing "chicken" with friends on the Santa Fe track. He was killed by an Amtrak train late on Aug 30 when he failed to jump off the track in time to avoid the 60 mph train..... CUMBRES AND TOLTEC scenic railroad in Colorado is the subject of a front page Wall Street Journal article on Sept 3..... GREYHOUND AND TRAILWAYS bus companies both began unlimited travel special fares Sept 9..... ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF 2-Highliner car train lost its brakes approaching the Kensington station on Chicago's Far South Side Aug 23, when it struck a rock taped to the track by vandals. The emergency brakes also failed to apply properly and the train was rolled to a stop with the assistance of off-duty engineers aboard who applied hand brakes. There were 250 passengers aboard the train when the object was struck at a 60mph speed. The train ran 2½ miles without brakes and overshot the Kensington station about 1000 feet. The event was not discovered by the press until Aug 29 ..... NEW YORK READER Ed Fox writes that he is astonished that RTN and other media accepted the July 21 Trenton flood and consequent blockage of Corridor trains without protest. Quote: "It is a sad commentary on the current U.S. rail situation that the one major passenger rail line in our most populated region can be blocked at its most central location without any alternative routes being considered. No wonder Greyhound officials had those sly smiles on their faces as they lined up their latest equipment for substitute service at Penn Station"..... BUSES WERE ALSO used in a shuttle around closed-down track between Philadelphia & Harrisburg for 2½ hrs on Sept 7 when PC shut off power because of a warehouse fire in North Philadelphia..... INFO ON AN NRHS rail-bus Yosemite tour Oct 25-6 from Box 8407, San Jose CA 95155....

The small horsetail waterfall at the east portal of Stampede Tunnel was running full, and heads had barely swung forward for the eastward descent when a long freight passed us westbound on the double track surviving on the east side of the summit. BN had assured Amtrak one year ago when removing the double track on the west side that passenger operations would not be affected by single-tracking of the route. However, there appears to be some solid doubt, with freights again scheduled in mid-day.

Passing Easton, I noted a portion of the former Milwaukee Road station alongside, knocked over; and discovered that the BN telegrapher now hands up orders for trains of both roads.

The afternoon proceeded pleasantly, and not only did the sun appear as we left the mountains behind, but also the temperatures began rising. We were on time in Yakima where it was 92°; it was a pleasure to feel the heat after the cool Seattle summer weather.

Although BN has done quite a bit of trackwork in the last year, the line is still bumpy south of Yakima on the flat Valley floor. Dinner here was noteworthy for: 1) so-so service and food; 2) a conversation across the aisle discussing the deterioration of the SUPER CHIEF at the hands of Amtrak; and 3) the wiggle-&-sway on the irregular roadbed at higher speeds.

Our arrival at Pasco was seven minutes early at 7:18pm; and I was delighted, as I would have more time to chat briefly with relatives who had come to meet the train, and supply provisions.

We backed away from the Pasco depot on time at 7:35pm, and within a few minutes were eastbound on the former SP&S Snake River line for Spokane. With the advent of the BN merger, the two Pasco-Spokane routes are operated as double track, eastbound traffic normally assigned to the SP&S due to easier grades.

It was nearly sunset, and our EMPIRE BUILDER picked up speed as it moved along the Snake River. To the right, in the center of the channel, are islands on which I had camped as a boy scout, a little smaller now, due to the backwater of McNary Dam. I felt a slight bit of nostalgia, erased as a girl in her 20's began worrying aloud how she would get to New York City if the EMPIRE BUILDER were late, and she missed her BROADWAY LIMITED connection at Chicago. She said: "Oh well, there must be several trains each day between two cities as large as New York and Chicago." I was about to tell her: "Sweetie, do I have news for you," but let it go.

Just about this time, one of Amtrak's new district supervisors came by, and we had a short chat. Within moments, it was obvious the new supervisor had his hands full, from employee problems to equipment. I pointed out the missing glass panel in the dome, and he looked at the jagged remnants of the top panel in disbelief, but had to admit that I was surely correct. I went with him to the locker at the end of the car to check the maintenance record. No mention of the missing dome panel. The interest and drive of this man was my first single inspiration of the trip, and I returned to my dome seat with the feeling that this man, a longtime railroader, not only knew what he was getting into when he joined Amtrak, but had a fairly good chance to help bring some order from the chaos; although I knew beyond a doubt the many harsh, tense and disappointing moments he was going to experience in the next year or two.

Suddenly, I felt more chipper. I felt that the detritus and neglect of the Amtrak Era, like the strongest of tides, soon may be reversed and overcome.

High above the Snake River, we took one last look at Lower Monumental Dam, and turned to speed through Devil's Canyon, a small box coulee once the course of the Palouse River, and later one of the many channels which absorbed the waters of the cataclysmic Spokane Flood at the end of the Ice Age some 18,000 years ago.

Night was rapidly falling when we passed Ankeny, where nearly 20 years ago on the EMPIRE BUILDER connection, when the GN domes were new, I had looked down on UP tracks which tunnel under the SP&S, and had seen the westbound UP SPOKANE, the overnight train to Portland, which carried a through sleeper to Los Angeles via the PORTLAND ROSE and CITY OF ST. LOUIS. More notstalgia.

At 9:43pm, we slipped by the "first tree." For years, when vacationing with the family in Northern Idaho, the "first tree" was a welcome sign. It told us we were leaving the desert and getting to a more pleasant clime, just as we passed this biologic marking of the eastern boundary of the Cascade rain shadow.

Shortly afterwards, a young coach attendant came up into the dome, tension in his voice. He had been told by the Amtrak service inspector that employees could not smoke in front of the passengers while on duty. He wanted to check this with the brakeman. The brakeman said that, indeed the inspector was correct. It was totally dark now, and the young attendant retreated, having been put down twice in about 30 minutes. Naturally, I thought, he had a morale problem. He had suffered a sense of insult needlessly, simply because he had not been told of the "no smoking" rule when he was first hired; and then embarrasment.

The older porter sitting across the dome aisle then began talking with the older brakeman. The porter said: "The young fellows jus' won't take what you and I have had to take all these years." There was a pause...and then he said: "They's on jus' for the summer." There was another pause, and there was much sadness in his voice when he said: "And they jus' don't care.." To me it seemed a poignant scene from "Gone With The Wind," and I could not help but deeply feel the great silence that pressed upon us all in the dome, as we sped through the scrub pine, over the good track, hurtling through the intense darkness to Spokane.

It seemed like only moments later as we made the big curve on the new bridge at Latah Junction, and rolled over the viaduct into the Spokane ex-NP station, stopping, still, to allow the brakeman to throw switches to line us into the depot.

The Amtrak supervisor seemed the first to hit the platform, and he had more problems. The a.c., working fine in all the passenger cars, was out, instead, in the crew dorm, and it was blazing hot. First order of business was to get that dorm cooled off, lest poor morale on the part of the crew tomorrow reduce the pleasure of the passengers.

The Spokane station, especially in the presence of a long passenger train, is a nearly mystic place, and I enjoyed every minute of the 30 min stop, noting, though, that NP could get a NORTH COAST in and out of the station in 12 mins, way back in 1967.

At 10:55pm, right on time, we pulled away. At 11:02pm, while the rear brakeman was aligning the switch, westbound No. 9, the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, pulled in directly alongside, and for about three minutes, my sleeping-car porter discussed the situation with the coach porter of No. 9. The consensus was that traffic was light. The NCH had about 40 coach passengers. No. 9's crew blamed the slump on the economy, and lack of a Spokane Expo this summer. At 11:05pm, the two trains that passed in the night, after pausing briefly, sped on their way.

Now it was down the great racetrack the last 65 miles to Sandpoint. Familiar landmarks sped by in the darkness, and gradually the uninhabited wilds of the Northern Idaho panhandle closed in. We were a few minutes late, but in a short time the track below rumbled as the BUILDER moved across the "Long Bridge" over Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced Ponder-AY) at Sandpoint. The conductor wanted to know if he should double-stop the train to put me off. I said no -- I was taking a motel south (west) of the depot, and my walk would be shorter if he put me off on the gravel.

It was 12:14am, only 4 mins. late, when I hit the ballast, and began walking back to town in the tranquil stillness. A week's respite from my windowless office --in a pleasant town, in a beautiful setting, with a great beach, and lots of trains "Omak", as the Indians would say: "Good Medicine".

A few nights later, while inspecting No. 9 arriving on time at 9:40pm, who should I spot unloading from the coaches in front of me but Amtrak President Paul Reistrup! My first impulse was to take a page from "Front Page" and rush up, announcing: "Lee here, Rail Travel News! Now then, a few questions:"

The vacation Me suddenly awoke, and summarily vetoed the idea. "Relax kid, you're on vacation, and so is he," said the Vacation Me. "There will be another time, perhaps soon, when you both can discuss this more pleasantly, and when neither of you are on vacation." Thus, for this brief interlude I concluded passenger trains would be a spectator sport only.

I'm sure it was for the best. The tide may definitely be changing. And when the time for an interview comes with the Amtrak President, there may be an increasing amount of "good" to talk about, and a decreasing amount of "bad". The hard work of the dedicated Amtrak supervisor may do much to account for that. And also the President's impromptu travels! And, after such a future talk, neither of us may be in as much need of the vacation pleasures of Sandpoint, Idaho as might otherwise be the case.

Postscript: A few hours later, Pres. Reistrup boarded NP 377, a dome sleeper that had been in terrible condition at Christmas, 1974, when I rode it both ways Seattle-Pasco. By March, 1975 it had been demoted to dormitory status on the EMPIRE BUILDER, perhaps the single most elegant dorm, (no matter how faded) in the history of American passenger trains. If NP 377 was in as bad a shape as I thought it was, there was no doubt that Pres. Reistrup is going to have to work hard to get that tide to stay turned.

CARS AND CONSISTS

***MONTREALER, train 61 at Springfield, MA on Sept 8: Amtrak diesels 249 & 280; bag-dorm 1401; dorm-sleeper 2100 "Everglades"; sleepers 2700 "Lake Wales", 2701 "Miami"; diner-lounge 8302; snack bar coach 3968; coaches 5409, 5804, 7002.

***EMPIRE BUILDER consists, all 6 sets, noted at Seattle Aug 4-9: (No. 1) engines 531, 533; cars 1102, 1202, 1551, 2035 "Loch Long", 9479, 5017 "Silver Cinch", 4550, 4863, 9321 "Silver Tower", 8067, 2659 "Silver Isle", 9221, 2652 "Silver Butte". (No. 2) engines 573, 577; cars 1009 "Silver Mesa", "Olympus", 1555, 2031 (unnamed, ex-NP "Loch Tay"), 4533, 9472, 4891, 4881, 4543, unnumbered Great Dome (probably "Mountain View"), 8047, 2641 "Pacific Waters", NP 377, 2661 "Silver Plain", 2678 "Silver Ridge". (No. 3) engines 578, 560; NP 227, 1164, 1570, "Silver Siesta" (unnumbered), 9450, 9470, 4551, 4851, 9330 "Silver Chateau", BN 1250, 2670 "Silver Terrain", 2615 "Pacific Hills", 2263 "Placid Lake". (No. 4 is same as noted in above article, on page 9; except typo there lists diner 8096 as 9096) (No. 5) 2 engines; 2 mail cars; BN 371 dorm, 2023 "Silver Repose", 5688, 9500 "Silver Bluff", 9464 (in GN blue), 6804, 9364 "Prairie View", 8093, 2617 "Pacific Island", 2654 "Silver Falls", 2651 "Silver Shore". (No. 6) 2 engines; 2 mail cars; 1402, 2034 "Loch Awe", 9455 "Silver Saddle" (running backwards), 9482, 4854, 5691, 9801 "Silver Patio", 8092, 2673 "Silver Boulder", 9220, 2624 "Pacific Patrol", 9201 "Starlight Dome".

***COAST STARLIGHT, train 11 at San Jose, CA Sept 4: Amtrak diesels 568, 570; baggage 1160, sleeper 2213 "Indian Flute"; coaches 4519, 4491; lunch counter diner 8102; coaches 4872, 4871, 4530, 4881; bar lounge 3351; diner 8041; sleepers 2657, 2723, 2350.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

NEW CLEVELAND TRAIN (Boston-Chicago) is to be numbered 48-49, and is expected to be scheduled for a 2pm Chicago departure, with New York arrival at 12:30pm, and the Boston section arriving at 4pm. Westbound, it will reach Chicago at 2:40pm... AMONG THE RUMORS circulating about Amtrak plans for the Midwest is a projected phase-out of Turboliners on the Chicago-St. Louis route, with the INTER-AMERICAN changed to run daily all the way to Chicago, and the STATE HOUSE the only Turbo remaining on the route, which would run only Chicago-Springfield. This would allow closing of the St. Louis commissary for economy purposes..... FOUR-PAGE ARTICLE in color, "A Guide to America's Trains," appears in the Sept issue of Better Homes & Gardens magazine. Descriptions of what to expect in train travel are quite fair and accurate..... A SURPRISE REJECTION of the California Transportation Dept's plan for transport development over the next 20 years was headlined in the Oakland Tribune Sept 14. The state Transportation Board did the rejecting of the 2-year, $20 million study, calling for delay of submission of the document until July 1 (it was expected to be submitted to the legislature by Jan 1, in order to quality the state for federal funds.) Criticisms were that the report was full of omissions (such as the failure to mention the existence of SP's commute line), and of inconsistencies of financial analysis..... BILL TO PROVIDE $240 million for out-of-work railroad people to repair track, supported by Amtrak's Paul Reistrup, has been approved by the House Commerce Committee, reports the Wall Street Journal (Sept 11). The Ford administration opposes the bill..... JAPAN'S BULLET TRAINS have carried over 900 million passengers, as of mid-month, reports the NY Times (Sept 14); however, the National Railways were reported late in August to be in serious financial trouble, with a cumulative deficit of $7.4 billion. The railway has asked for more government assistance..... THAT BIG STUDY of high speed trains from Vancouver to Tijuana recently passed Congress, is being conducted by Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. at a cost of $99,308, with the DOT presiding. The high-speed link being looked at would run thru Seattle, Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Los Angeles and San Diego..... CHICAGO-TORONTO SERVICE is coming before year-end, according to fairly reliable reports. One proposal is a day train with Amtrak & CN each providing one set of equipment. Both CN and Amtrak want a parlor car and diner, tho they are in very short supply..... AMTRAK BEGAN USE of the refurbished Santa Fe commissary at 22nd & Wentworth in Chicago on Sept 6. Amtrak may begin preparing its own sandwiches there for use on Turboliners, etc..... IT'S FAIRLY WELL known now that Amtrak is very interested in running the SUNSET LIMITED daily on the El Paso-Los Angeles segment. Reader Michael Koch says he's seen the train running very heavy lately, with 4 hi-level coaches and 6 sleepers frequently the summer consist.....

* * *

A PAINFUL RUMOR making the rounds is that GE may have built the new Amtrak P30 locomotives two inches wider than specifications, making for possible problems on high-level platforms..... A NEW MOVIE, "Give 'Em Hell, Harry," on the life of former president Truman, will premiere in Independence, MO Sept 18. To publicize the event, a train leaving Detroit Sept 17 with a stop in St. Louis the morning of the 18th, will try to recreate Truman's 1948 whistlestop campaign by rail. After the premiere, the train will leave Kansas City early on the 19th and will run to Boston, with stops at Dallas-Ft. Worth, Atlanta, and Washington DC.....

* * *

AMTRAK'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS Vice President Ed Edel has answered airlines' complaints about Amtrak's Northeast cartoon ads comparing air and rail travel, reports Travel Weekly (Sept 11). Edel pointed out that the airlines have gotten millions in indirect government aid, including advancement of air technology thru development of military aircraft. He termed the ads "factual and honest".....

AMTRAK IS WILLING to extend half of the Seattle-Portland service south to Eugene, OR provided the state can come up with a $306,000 a year subsidy. The train would leave Portland at 7:50pm, arriving Eugene at 10:45pm, with stops at Woodburn, Salem and Albany. Northward, it would leave at 5:35am, reaching Portland at 8:55am. The State Dept. of Transportation will make a recommendation Sept 24--it's also considering an alternate augmentation of bus service in the Willamette Valley..... AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL stole two cars of a Long Island Rail Road train from the Jamaica yards Aug 30 and ran them at speeds up to 80mph for 12 miles until power was cut off and the train halted at Baldwin and the man fled. The NY Times apparently erred in reporting the date as Sept 6..... STEAM ENGINE 39 of the Long Island R.R. is being restored as a Bicentennial project, and help and donations are being accepted by Steam Loco Preservation Fund Inc., No. 39 Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton NY 11932...

* * *

MEXICAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS will build a new, exclusively tourist passenger rail line from La Paz in Southern Baja Calif. to Cabo San Lucas..... THE WASHINGTON STAR (Sept 8) has editorialized in favor of giving Amtrak more space in Washington Union Station than the Interior Dept wants in its remodeling into a National Visitors Center. The DOT also favors Amtrak's request to retain adequate space for ail operations. The Star said the present plan could create "a botch of major dimension," and called upon Congress to do something..... SANTA BARBARA'S PIER will get a major $5.47 million development, including 4 "old-fashioned" streetcars running to the end of the wharf. Then people can view the off-shore oil wells in style..... DOT SECRETARY COLEMAN, in Seattle with President Ford Sept 4, said he hopes that Amtrak can attract more passengers, but thinks the automobile will remain a major element in national transportation. He warned that short-haul routes will become more dependent upon buses if rail transportation proves "uneconomical"..... THE LAST DAYS of the summer season saw the COAST STARLIGHT running badly off schedule most days, apparently the result of freight interference and track work in Northern California..... A CORRECTION IN Glenn Lee's NCH story last issue: lounge car "Silver Cup" was not a CZ car, but a former DENVER ZEPHYR "Chuck Wagon" coffee-shop car..... CANADIAN TRANSPORT MINISTER Jean Marchand has submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Trudeau. Heis being treated for exhaustion at an Ottawa hospital. Marchand was r3cently convicted and fined $200 on a drunken driving charge..... WHEN THE FLORIDIAN begins its stops in Lafayette, IN, it will be street-running downtown there, and passengers will find that the waiting room is the Lahr Hotel. There is no ticket office as such..... ST. LOUIS TURBOLINER 301 malfunctioned Aug 29 and conventional equipment (1 diesel, 3 cars) was substituted, which left Chicago at 11:30am..... THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED arrived late in Chicago Sept 1--at 7:30pm--due to a rock slide reportedly near Raton. The train may have been detoured..... A TEST TRAIN was run by Amtrak Sept 9 from Chicago-Champaign on ICG, and presumably farther, leaving Chicago 9am. Consist was Amtrak E unit 203, snack coach "Silver Parlor", and DOT test cars T3 and T4. The same train was to have run on the BLACK HAWK route Sept 5, but it was cancelled..... THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE ran as second #355 Detroit-Chicago on Aug 29, and back to Jackson, MI on Sept 1 as advanced #352. Penn Central suggested running the train to Chicago on weekends due to heavy Friday evening crowds, but Amtrak opposed the idea at first because it would spoil its all-Turbo corridor image on the Chicago-Detroit route....

* * *

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION denied BN a 15% commuter fare increase Sept 11..... THE METROLINER TELEPHONES will be coming off Oct 31 because the White House wants the channels for another use. The Wall Street Journal said the AT&T lost about $1.1 million on the service since it began in Jan 1969..... THE PENN CENTRAL is asking for a fare increase of up to 25% on the non-Amtrak Philadelphia-New York trains, to bring them up to Amtrak fare scales.....

THE SEASHORE LINE, connecting Lindenwold, NJ with Atlantic City, Ocean City and Cape May, has been saved by action of Gov. Byrne (Sept 8), in his decision to retain the state subsidy to the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line..... RENO FUN TRAIN will make its first seasonal run from the San Francisco area Nov 7. Info from American Rail Tours, 210 Post St., San Francisco 94108..... THE "CLAMDIGGER" NAME has now been given to a bus service (it used to be an RDC) New London-New Haven CT..... THE MERCHANTS LIMITED'S former diner is now being run on train 173, the STATESMAN, reports Al Crossley..... TRACK IMPROVEMENTS ALONG the Shore Line route in Connecticut are expected to cause delays "which we cannot estimate," according to notices posted by PC in the area recently..... THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION reported late last month on Amtrak's study of the proposed Atlanta-Los Angeles route. A decision will be made on it early next year. Amtrak said it would lose $7 million a year on the run, compared to the next costliest under consideration, a Los Angeles-Ogden route which would lose $740,000. Amtrak's analyxis showed that 120,000 persons per year would ride the southern transcon route, on a train carrying 3 coaches, diner and sleeper. The 50-hour, 3000-mile trip would cost about $200 one-way..... FREEDOM TRAIN UPDATE: When the train reaches Texas, it may be powered in that state by a refurbished Texas & Pacific steam locomotive #610. Richard Jensen of Ft. Worth expects to have the engine in shape by January for the Freedom Train. The engine is named "Will Rogers". In San Mateo, CA, Albert F. Conrad is starting a fund drive to finance a stop for the train in that city south of San Francisco. And the town of Springfield, OR is complaining that the stop scheduled for Nov. 18-21 may be costlier to the town than orginally believed..... A RAILROAD STRIKE involving Boilermakers, Railway Carmen, Electrical Workers and Firemen has been delayed by President Ford for 60 days beyond Sept 2 while an emergency board works on the dispute..... BRITISH RAIL PLANS for cuts of up to 40% in service in January because of an annual operating deficit of over $720 million on its passenger service. Unions said they would oppose the cuts..... MILWAUKEE ROAD COMMUTER train struck a work train near Grand and Homan Avenues the morning of Sept 4. The Chicago-bound 2-car train carried 220 riders, and 8 people were injured. The train was said to be on the wrong track, the result of orders not being passed on to the engineer, who was hospitalized in the accident..... FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION appointed a new deputy administrator Sept 8. He is Bruce M. Flohr, an SP Division Superintendent in San Antonio. He will chair the FRA Safety Committee, among other duties.....

AMTRAK'S NEW 5-YEAR PLAN FOR RAIL TRAVEL

Amtrak submitted its annual 5-year plan to Congress and the DOT this month. The corporation released summaries of the document Sept 8, predicting that ridership will climb from 3.8 billion revenue psgr miles in Fiscal 1975 to 8.6 billion in 1980, a 226% rise. To meet the demand for equipment, Amtrk proposes ordering 356 more low-level cars and 187 long distance cars in Fiscal 1977, and 66 new locomotives beginning this year. Amtrak said that previous plans to standardize 1000 older cars to operate with the new Amfleet are "not economically or mechanically feasible." The total fleet of cars will number 2263 by 1980, an increase of just 9%, but available seats will more than double due to higher capacities of the newer cars. The plan assumes the addition of one new 1000-mile route and 3 state-supported short routes each year between 1977 and 1980, and that one route each year will be discontinued, based on new route evaluation criteria to be sent to Congress soon. Amtrak is including in its analysis 3 new state-supported routes in the current fiscal year, and said it will also add new trains this year on existing routes. Amtrak said that without inflation it would need only $79 million in grants by 1980, but inflation pushes that figure up to about $360 million. However, productivity is predicted to improve--from $7.19 in grants per train mile in Fiscal 1976 to $2.13 by Fiscal 1980.

Rail Canada

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAIL has applied to the Canadian Transport Commission, reports the Wall Street Journal, to eliminate its off-season bargain fares on the CANADIAN. The fares normally apply between Sept 16 and June 1. Fares at the summer rate will now apply all year long, if the CTC approves. However, summer sleeping car surcharges will be dropped for the off-season, and will be resumed next June 1. The Journal said that CP stated the red-white-blue fare system "led to traffic imbalances."

CN MANAGEMENT NEWS (Aug 20) published a warning by passenger marketing head Garth Campbell of passenger cutbacks. The following is reprinted from that source: "CN may have to reduce its passenger service by as much as 10% next year... Speaking on recent TV and radio news broadcasts, (Campbell) said there may be fewer trains than ever, in spite of an expected increase in the number of travellers. The Olympic Games in Montreal, for instance, would generate more traffic. Cars are wearing out, said Mr. Campbell. Of the fleet of 248 sleeping cars, 31 must be retired. They are not worth repairing. Railiners are also wearing out--4 of the 40 odd will be out of service in 1976. He said in the long-haul passenger service, where the average trip is 900 miles or more, all CN's extra cars are used during the summer period, and this is the service that is bound to be most seriously affected.

"With Amtrak expanding its service in the U.S., and the U.S. bicentennial next year, there are no cars available south of the border to be bought or leased. As to buying new cars in Canada, Mr. Campbell said it would take about 3 years to get them if they were ordered now. In addition, he explained, 'The capital budget of the railway has to be submitted to the Government of Canada, and, like all such expenditures, they have to be reviewed and each item evaluated. When it comes to passenger equipment, I think it raises questions as to whether the equipment is really necessary, in which direction the service is going, whether there is a future. Over the past few years we've been asking these kinds of questions but we haven't been getting answers. Every time the subject of new capital comes up, we simply ask the questions all over again without resolving the problem. Unfortunately, time keeps slipping by.'

"He said even the Turbos may become a problem. They are being heavily used, there are no spare trains, and none are being built at the moment. R. C. Smith, a spokesman for the railway unions, said in the same broadcasts: 'We see that passenger service should be improved and we know that CN is trying to do it, but they don't have the money and there's only one place for them to get it, and that's from the government.'"

TORONTO AREA TRANSIT Operating Authority announced Sept 5 a plan for redevelopment of station facilities for GO Transit's Lakeshore rail commuters. The $3.5 million program, still to be approved by the Transport Minister and the Provincial cabinet, would cover a 2-year development, with the following stations rebuilt the first year: Guildwood, Eglinton, Scarborough, Port Credit, and Clarkson. The second phase completed by the end of 1977, would see Pickering, Rouge Hill, Danforth, Mimico, Long Branch, and Oakville redeveloped. GO Transit is now carrying over 22,000 passengers daily, about 50% more than the originally projected 15,000.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAIL'S "Princess Patricia" will make a special post-season Canadian Thanksgiving cruise Oct 10-13. The ship will visit Seattle for the first time in several years, and will cruise Seymour Narrows. Vancouver departure is 8:30pm Oct 10 with return 4pm Oct 13. Fares range from $125 to $325 per person. Blaney's Travel Service in Victoria (920 Douglas St.) is booking the voyage.

CANADIAN NEWS BRIEFS: Montreal bus and subway drivers began a strike Aug 20... A province-wide Quebec power outage Aug 30 left subway unaffected, as it was closed by the strike... Toronto Globe & Mail (Aug 23) criticized Amtrak's failure to include Canadians in its new USArail pass plan... British Columbia Rwy "Royal Hudson" steam excursion season ends Oct 13...

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Part of an Amtrak interoffice memorandum: In order that we maintain systematized reciprocal flexibility the Western Region, approximately, six months ago expanded on the location code identification in conjunction with accounting via verbalization and in line with the present 'Location Code Index,' which was furnished by the accounting department."

--From The Washington Star's "Gobbledygook" column, Sept 5.

Urban - Suburban Transit

THE BART BOARD of Directors has voted to decrease the minimum fare from 30¢ to 25¢ to put it in line with Bay Area bus fares, and to increase the maximum fares. A plan to institute BART parking lot fees was defeated.

WASHINGTON STATE PLAN for financing public transit with a 2¢/gal added gasoline tax is receiving strong citizen approval. The state legislature is working on it.

NEW COMMUTER SERVICE in Southern California will commence Jan 26, a date set early this month by the 3-county County Transportation Service Organization. A train of equipment purchased earlier from an Oregon line will begin running on the L.A.-San Diego route, and operators expect Amtrak to provide one set of equipment.

A WILDCAT STRIKE by Transit Authority of River City bus drivers in Louisville shut down service on Sept 1.

NEW YORK COMMUTERS were unhappy over the fare increase to 50¢ this month, and demonstrations and injuries were reported in the city. On Sept 13 a motorcade organized by the Coalition to Fight the Fare Hike paraded thru Manhattan. Half-fare rates of 25¢ are in effect 6pm Saturdays to 1am Mondays.

CONTINENTAL TRAILWAYS BUSES began ICC-approved half-fare tickets for unemployed individuals on Sept 8.

A PROPOSAL FOR a politically independent commission to look over mass transit system construction in Los Angeles was proposed in the state legislature Sept 3.

BOEING VERTOL COMPANY'S new streetcar designed for Boston and San Francisco use has successfully completed an 11-week test period in Boston. Further tests will be made at the DOT test facility at Pueblo, CO.

THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE has approved a bill by Sen. James Mills to appropriate $18.9 million for transportation projects, including a provision allowing BART to use federal funds to extend daily service to midnight (the system now closes at 8 pm). Other funds in the bill are to study S.F. Peninsula transit alternatives and a commuter railway in Santa Clara County, plus a proposed new rail line between San Jose and Santa Cruz.

Express Ads

SLIDES WANTED 35mm, pre-Amtrak, North and Latin America, especially US Eastern RR's. Need info on disposition of NYC/NH psgr cars. I am planning to finish list of all NYC cars sold, converted, scrapped, etc., with dates. HW list 90% completed, need help on LW cars. Dick Brundage, 3769 S. Yale, Tulsa OK 74135.

HEY, PAUL: Don't you agree AMTRAK won't make a nickel til we get the politics out? Why delay 9/15 startup of CLEVE train to Oct 31? Is it worth losing 6 wks revenue to re-elect a mayor locally compared to the Wizard of Oz?

DRAWING ROOMS ON AMTRAK! It's possible, on occasion, to travel in drawing room luxury at bedroom prices. For full information, contact "the train people" at GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, 9th Floor, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. And of course moneysaving "family plan" applies!

AMTRAK LAW: New unofficial edition with all the latest amendments, $6. Edited by Robert J. Swan, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90811.

Liberty Bell, Paul Revere, Molly Pitcher, Ethan Allen, U.S.S. Constitution and Minute Man Bicentennial uniform buttons, 60¢ each or all six $3.20. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844

Combine fun of riding SOUTHWEST LIMITED and a Colorado River Float trip Columbus Holiday weekend Oct 10-14, 1975. Upper berth only $195.00. Private rooms $265.00 Flyer from Let's Travel P O Box 2768 Riverside CA 92506 Phone 714-787-8350.

NEW SAN JOAQUIN EXCURSION FARES a train riders paradise. 4-day round trip is only $32.29 between L.A. and San Francisco, $19.50 Oakland and Bakersfield, $11.00 Oakland and Merced, $20.29 L.A. and Merced. Tickets from Let's Travel, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92506 - Phone 714-787-8350.

TO ALL CRO SUPERVISORS: Please accept my apologies for the ad placed in the last issue of this newsletter. An anonymous Amtrak employee.

WHEN YOU WANT YOUR MESSAGE TO GET OUT IN A HURRY, RTN's Express Ads are the way to go. The cost is only 50¢ per line of 80 spaces. And here's good news for display advertisers: we can once again offer you full-page ad space, at only $25 per page (size 5x8 inches). Rear cover, when available, is $25 for 5x6 space. Smaller display ad sizes are priced in proportion. Write: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Ad Dept., Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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